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RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: INTER-PALESTINIAN DIFFERENCES

¶1. Summary: Editorials describe the current stalemate between Hamas and Fatah as very dangerous. The editorials urged the conflicting Palestinian factions to work together and solve their own differences, because any further deterioration in relations will only be to the benefit of Israel. End Summary.

¶2. Under the headline "In order to not achieve Israel's goals", Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) wrote in a 12/17 editorial:

"...What Palestinian is witnessing these days, including the legality and illegality of actions, the referendum, and other matters, are all issues that are not in the interests of the Palestinian cause, rather they are explosive mines that endanger the Palestinian community at large. The loose security situation Palestinian cities and villages are experiencing is clear evidence that things have reached a vicious circle that will hurt everyone without exception. Palestine must always remain above all parties, organizations, positions and portfolios. As long as the Israeli occupation remains, everyone is responsible to end it and the factions must forget their differences and focus instead on restoring the rights of the Palestinian people."

¶3. Under headline "A no-return slide", Dubai-based Arabic daily "Al-Bayan," (circulation 85,000) wrote in a 12/17 editorial:

"What is dangerous is that for the first time symbols from both Hamas and Fatah are being targeted by both bullets and accusations. These attacks bring grave security consequences... It seems that the first victim of this is a national unity government and the possibility of a resumption of the national dialogue. What is even worse is that the current impasse escalates the state of tension and congestion with even more serious consequences. The painful paradox is that this is happening while Israel is finishing its final legal touches to separate Eastern Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. This is in preparation for its final gradual annexation which has been going for a while in addition to the racist separation wall that has swallowed Arab territories. Further deterioration between the Palestinian parties will be a fatal mistake on the part of all Palestinians."

¶4. Abu Dhabi-based Arabic daily carried a cartoon of an Arab boy asking his father who seemed to be bewildered by the question: "Dad, before Christopher Columbus explored America, who used to interfere in world affairs?"

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